MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Soil and Water Conservation Program

Quarterly Update
November 2023

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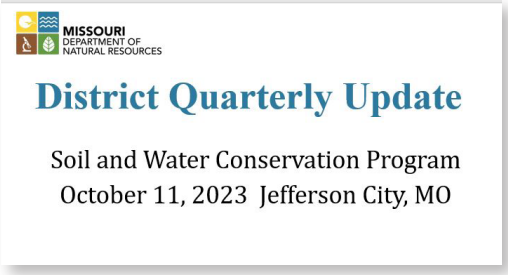
QUARTERLY UPDATE MEETINGS

In an effort to provide transparency between the program office and districts, the program office will offer quarterly Webex meetings. Each meeting will have an agenda of current topics for discussion and time for questions at the end. These updates are open to both district staff and board supervisors.



A new section has also been created on the Soil and Water intranet page titled, All Districts SWCD Meetings. This section is located on the left under the Memos and Correspondence link. Featured in this section will be links to the meeting recordings and any presentations from those meetings for staff to review if they were unable to attend or missed something that was discussed. If there is a topic that you would like discussed in more detail or there is a district employee that you would like to recognize for outstanding work in one of these updates, contact your district coordinator. The next quarterly meeting will be sometime in the third quarter.

DISTRICT TRUCKS

The program office is committed to providing a truck to each of the 114 districts and we are steadily working our way through the list of districts that still need a truck. Due to the current economic environment, production of the current order was delayed more than a year. If your district was up for the next round of trucks, we were excited to announce that production on the current order has been scheduled, with a projected delivery date around the first of the calendar year. When the program office has disbursed the funds to the districts receiving trucks during this cycle, we will be able to evaluate when the next round of trucks can be ordered.

POLICY CHANGES AND ADDITIONS

The Soil and Water Conservation Commission decided at the Sept. 27 meeting that the DSP 3.2 policy needed to be updated to allow the use of the N472 practice in conjunction with the 3.2 practice. This will allow cost-share for fencing an already existing pond within the boundaries of a grazing paddock where water is provided with cost-share funds.

The DSP 3.6 practice was also added to the cost-share policy. This is a new practice that will allow warm-season grasses to be added to pastureland where permanent vegetative cover is already existing and would be enhanced with the addition of those Native Warm Season Forages (NWSF). Up to 20% of the grazable areas are eligible for conversion into NWSF and all other grazing policies still apply.

ELECTIONS

Elections for areas 1 and 3 are quickly approaching. The time to publicize for nominations and the nomination period which will run Nov. 1-30, 2023. Following are answers to common questions that may help make the election process run more smoothly. If your district has more specific questions, please contact your district coordinator.

1. What if a district can only find one candidate or even no candidates?

Every district must do its best to ensure that every effort is made to recruit board members. However, if candidates cannot be found within the current areas, area lines can be redrawn with commission permission. It is also important to remember that a board member does not need to be a landowner, but can be a land representative.

2. What are some suggestions to help increase voter turnout?

Consider holding an annual meeting, open house or other event during the voting period. Ask eligible voters to participate when they come to the office to sign paperwork. Enlist FSA and NRCS to help spread the word when landowners come in to work with them. Do more advertising than just the minimum required.

3. Can you pay election judges?

Compensation is allowable, but a receipt on district letterhead is needed to validate the expense.

4. If a ballot was not signed, do I need a new ballot?

If the ballot is not signed correctly, the ballot is not valid.

5. Where are ballots located for each district?

Ballots are located on the district's intranet homepage. The ballot can be printed off of your internet page to have copies in your office for anyone who wishes to vote in person.

6. How long and how often does the district need to publicize the election?

The district needs to make sure that the election is publicized in the office with a counter display or poster, on the district web page and either a radio or newspaper add, at a minimum. There is not a maximum number of times that the district can publicize the election.

7. How does the district verify voter eligibility?

The district needs to request a list of the farms that are registered with FSA or are classified as an agricultural entity by the county assessor.

8. I have a landowner that owns several farms in different areas, can they run for the board?

Yes, but they would need to choose which area/farm they will represent.

9. Do you have to be a landowner to be on the SWCD board?

No; however, they do need to be a land representative from the district they would represent. A land representative is an individual who has been given authority by a current landowner and is a taxpayer of the county in which they would be running for the board. More information on board member qualifications can be found on page 1 of the District Operations Manual section V. District Elections.

STREAM TEAM

We can all have an impact on the health and quality of our local streams. If you're considering or already have invested in conservation practices on your property, it may interest you to know how that investment can impact your local stream or larger watershed. One way to find out is to look into Missouri's Stream Team Program! The Stream Team Program provides opportunities for all citizens to learn about and get involved in stream conservation. A key way we support stream conservation is by holding educational events and trainings where folks can learn about what water quality is and how to measure it - including aquatic life.

Aquatic life can be greatly impacted by changes near a stream, such as removing riparian cover or shade, or by sediment and excessive nutrients entering the stream system. If you have implemented conservation practices, you may be able to support positive changes to the aquatic life or improvements in the stream' water chemistry. The best way to know if the stream life or composition has changed is by data collection.

The Stream Team Program provides free classes on data collection methods so that citizens can see and report what lives in their streams. These classes are held continuously in the spring and fall throughout the state. Data collection on streams, paired with conservation practices such as stream restoration practices, can lead to improvement of our water resources and promote the health of Missouri's citizens and its waterways. If you're interested in learning more or engaging in our program, please visit our website at Mostreamteam.org.

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

Pettis County

What do you consider to be the biggest accomplishments for Pettis County for FY23/FY24?

In FY24, so far we have obligated nearly $70,000 in the grazing management resource concern, which is one of our largest years yet!

Are there any events that the district hosted or were involved in that you would like to point out, such as field days or school visits?

The Pettis County office is involved in participating in both the Women in Ag Area Envirothon and State Envirothon, and we serve on those planning committees.

Did the district support any other organizations, such as 4-H, FFA other local organizations? Did the district participate in the poster contest?

The district tries to sponsor one or two local Envirothon teams each year.

Do you have a rental equipment program? What kinds of equipment, amount it went out?

Pettis County has several pieces of equipment available for landowner use and FY23 was one of our busiest years, with our rental equipment servicing around 100 landowners. Our rental equipment include:

- 15’ John Deere drill
- 10’ Great Plains drill
- 6’ Truax drill
- Silt fence plow
- Highline Bale Pro mulcher

Who is on your staff? Anything you want to highlight about your staff?

- Zach Harding has served 11 years, Tiffani Scott eight years and Ashlynn Stevenson three years. We all participate in various committees and serve in other roles outside of the district.
- Zach serves as the Northwest Central Region assistant grazing school coordinator
- Tiffani serves with the Employees Association as well as the District Operations and Program Delivery Committee
- Ashlynn serves with the Women in Ag Envirothon
- Board Members: Alan Ream, Mark Rieckhoff, Gene Schmitz, Nicholas Asbury and Charles Hardy
- Our board chairman has served 22 years and our board is very supportive of retaining good employees through increased wages and great benefits, as shown by their fundraising efforts to support paying employees from local funds. They truly understand their role as supervisors and have created an environment where employees can be successful.

UPCOMING DATES:

Supplemental Allocation 11/2/2023

Program Office Closed 11/10/2023

Program Office Closed 11/23/2023

Training Conference 11/27-29/2023

Election publicized 11/1-30/2023

Commission Meeting 11/27/2023

THE FISHERS AND FARMERS PARTNERSHIP FUNDS FARMER-LED EFFORTS. WHO'S NEXT?

By Kaitlyn Wiehe

La Crosse, Wisconsin

Stemming from a concerned farmer whose land was washing away, the planting of Missouri's own Huzzah Creek riparian buffer grew into a web of community partnerships focused on conserving farms and protecting fish habitats. One branch of funding came from the Fishers and Farmers Partnership (FFP), and they are looking to do more in 2024.

Gary Mullen, a 3rd generation farmer, had struggled with land loss for years during heavy rains, but the riparian buffer Mullen planted some 20 years ago is washing his worries away (pun intended). Oaks, walnuts, and sycamores work together to ensure against soil erosion and filter polluted runoff before it enters the creek. Now, he has a prime pasture for his cow-calf herd and a natural way to protect his land. Mullen's project was initiated when agencies, non-profits, and landowners started to collaborate on grassroots conservation projects. The result was the Shoal Creek Woodlands for Wildlife, a bottom-up, self-organized team of local landowners and naturalist professionals. Over the next few years, this landowner advisory committee would be funded by several governmental agencies and non-profits, including the Fishers and Farmers Partnership. Now, 5 miles of the Huzzah Creek are protected thanks to these initiatives from landowners and the support of outside agencies. You can read the full article here.

The Fishers & Farmers Partnership believes in a collaborative model that empowers farmers to lead the way in conservation. Fifty-five farmer-led projects across the Upper Mississippi River Basin have received over 1.8 million dollars in funding from FFP, and they are looking for more projects to fund. Applications for 2025 funding are being accepted until January 15, 2024. Take charge of your own conservation initiatives just as Gary Mullen and the community along Huzzah Creek have. Learn more about FFP and find funding information at www.fishersandfarmers.org.